

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Claim 1. An article of footwear comprising:  
a flexible upper;  
a tightening arrangement provided on the upper to tighten the foot within  
the upper;  
the upper comprising a molded heel stiffener;  
an outer sole.

Claim 2. An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:  
said heel stiffener comprises a rear wall and a base extending substantially  
up to an area of a front limit of a plantar arch of a wearer.

Claim 3. An article of footwear according to claim 2, wherein:  
said heel stiffener comprises two lateral edges adapted to protect rear lateral  
edges of the upper.

Claim 4. An article of footwear according to claim 3, wherein:  
said heel stiffener comprises a pivoting recess at a junction of said lateral  
edges and said rear wall.

Claim 5. An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:  
said heel stiffener includes housings for positioning and adhesively securing  
at least one strap or said outer sole.

Claim 6. An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:  
said heel stiffener is made of rubber.

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Claim 7. An article of footwear according to claim 1, wherein:  
said outer sole comprises two portions with different thicknesses.

Claim 8. A method for assembling an article of footwear, said method comprising:

- assembling the upper to an insole;
- pressing and cementing to the upper a molded heel stiffener;
- pressing and cementing to the front of the upper a front protective strip;
- pressing and cementing to the rear of the upper a strap overlapping the heel stiffener and the front protective strip,
- pressing and cementing the outer sole.